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Rapport d'une recherche ayant pour objet: 1. de déterminer les habiletés d'apprentissage du langage nécessaires à la réussite d'études universitaires chez les étudiants à temps partiel de l'enseignement professionnel, au niveau du baccalauréat en éducation; 2. de fournir une formation en ce domaine à l'intérieur du programme régulier; 3. de faire des recommandations pour améliorer la situation chez les étudiants actuels et futurs. Les étudiants inscrits à ces cours sont souvent des adultes qui n'ont pas fait d'études universitaires et dont les habiletés de langage sont plutôt faibles.

La démarche a consisté à faire une revue de la littérature, à identifier avec les professeurs les habiletés d'apprentissage du langage nécessaires, à faire identifier par les étudiants leurs habiletés au moyen d'un pré-test et d'un post-test. Le pré-test utilisé a été le "Wrenn study-habits inventory". Des tests de lecture et d'écriture ont aussi été administrés.

Parmi les recommandations formulées, on peut noter celles-ci: 1. l'établissement d'une politique de la part des professeurs concernant les habiletés de langage nécessaires pour suivre tout le programme qu'ils donnent; 2. une auto-vérification des habiletés d'apprentissage du langage des étudiants dès leur inscription au programme; 3. le développement de matériel didactique; 4. une visite des bibliothèques par les étudiants dès le début des cours; 5. l'intégration, par tous les moyens, des habiletés d'apprentissage du langage au contenu des cours professionnels.

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Assessment of Language/Study Skills of Students Entering the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program

Donna Logsdon Cook, Ed.D.

McGILL UNIVERSITY
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A Final Report

by

Donna Logsdon Cook, Ed.D.

Submitted to

Service Général de la Formation du Personnel de l'Enseignement
Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Supérieur
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SUMMARY

The major objective of this study was to identify and make provisions for language/study skills needed by students entering the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program for the successful completion of their initial university coursework. Data collected in this study were used in formulating recommendations for increasing language/study skills competencies for future students in the program.

Since students in the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program are often mature adults with little or no recent higher education, the language/study skills exhibited by these students have often been assessed by their professors as below university standards. University professors of vocational education agreed with this researcher that identification of essential language/study skills and the opportunity for students to develop and/or refine these skills and habits in the initial phase of their program might enable the students to complete their program with more efficiency and better understanding than in the past. In addition, it was assumed that students who became more aware of the importance of effective language/study skills might subsequently teach their own students skills which they had found useful. Although no direct transfer of this training was provided in the study, professors in the integrated course stressed that these study skills and language competencies were important and useful at all levels of education and in business and industry as well.

Initially, a review of the literature was conducted and language/study skills deemed necessary for success in the initial phase of the program were identified by professors experienced in teaching the course. Then during the initial phase of the program, an intensive integrated summer course, students were asked to identify their study habits in pretests and a posttest. Since students enrolled in the initial intensive phase of the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program have demands on their time and energy such as to prohibit them from pursuing separate courses for the improvement of language/study skills and since language/study skills are best learned when applied to meaningful situations and content, initial attempts at refresher practice or remediation were carried out as part of the integrated course. For example, various reading strategies were practiced and discussed in view of reading assignments within the course. Methods for review and for studying for tests were discussed and practiced prior to mid-term exams. Strategies for vocabulary development were applied to required written materials. Language/study skill strengths as well as deficiencies were noted by the researcher and pointed out to students for their further use and improvement. While parameters of this study restricted student contact time to limited classroom time within a tightly structured intensive course, some lunchtime practice sessi ns, and some individual tutoring sessions set up at the individual's request, it is evident that to acquire skills and develop strengths, students must practice skills and habits consistently over a long period of time.

Data from this study show the need for language/study skill assistance to be made available before entrance to the program or early in the program, to B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time students. Data upon which an assistance program can be based include reading rate/comprehension/efficiency scores, identified study habits causing difficulties for first and second year students, errors on writing samples, and professors' identification of essential skills.

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

Because students enrolled in the initial phase of the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program have often been found by their professors to be deficient in language/study skills and because the nature of their initial course allows no time for additional instruction in study skills outside their program, the following objectives were formulated for this project:

- to assess the language/study skills of typical students in the initial phase of the program;
- to identify language/study skills deemed necessary for successful completion of the program;
- to provide language/study skill instruction within the course framework;
- to make recommendations for further development and refinement of language/study skills by current and future students in the program.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

For the purpose of this study, language/study skills may be identified as those language skills necessary for successful understanding through reading, writing, speaking, and listening in combination with those skills commonly utilized for university level learning. The latter skills include the following: efficient listening and notetaking, efficient reading and note-taking, reading for retention, concentration, outlining, vocabulary development, writing strategies, maintaining standards

for written work, studying techniques, and methods for taking tests successfully.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENTS

Students enrolled in the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program are often mature adults with considerable work experience in their vocational area; however, they usually have had little or no recent experience in higher education. Moreover, some students exhibit a generally low level of language competency, due in some cases to learning English as a second or third language. For some students, this deficiency is apparent in oral communication while for others it is seen in the student's reading or writing skills and habits. As these students are highly motivated to do well in the program and often come into the program with concerns about their language/study skills, they are extremely receptive to learning new skills or to refreshing or refining previously learned skills.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Basic Integrated Course (436-266C) as offered in Summer, 1979, included modules in general methods (with micro-teaching), curriculum, educational psychology, evaluation, and management. The students, most of whom were in their first experience with university level courses, worked in an intensive time framework, in class from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM (with a one hour lunch break) each week day for the six week period. As grades for all modules were combined for a final grade, students received one grade for the eight credit course (see Appendix A).

The intensive format of the basic course placed such demands on the time and energy of the students as to prohibit them from pursuing separate courses for the improvement of language/ study skills.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

An ERIC search using descriptors including Language Skills, Study Skills, Study Habits and Reading Skills with Vocational Education Teachers yielded no references to studies or other publications directly related to the purpose of this study. No research studies dealing with teaching preservice and inservice teachers language/study skills were found. One report, of only indirect relation, described a workshop designed to develop the knowledge and skills vocational teachers need to prepare effective written proposals for obtaining federal funds in the United States. Since vocational educators were found to lack training in writing such proposals, a workshop in proposal writing was conducted to inform participants about funding sources, how to apply for funds, and how to express their ideas in writing.

A number of writers stressed the need for increased language competency on the part of both the high school vocational teachers and students (5, 10, 11, 18). For example, several articles appearing in Business Education Forum called for business education teachers to demand clarity in communication, to use and teach simple English language skills, and to improve students' writing through improved assignments of writing tasks (1, 11, 14). Of special note is the work by Peter Incardone (1978), who stated that vocational educational teachers in secondary schools have no more important task than to teach subject area reading skills to their students. He discussed

common sight reading skills (e.g. learning technical vocabulary) and textbook/manual skills (e.g. using a textbook), but did not discuss how or when the teachers prepared themselves for teaching reading in their content areas (10).

The area dealing with the treatment of academic skills instruction in higher education has a more substantial body of literature. Einstein (1967), for instance, in a discussion of why students drop out of college*, cited inadequacy in academic skills necessary for success in college courses, not knowing how to budget time, and not knowing how to study effectively (3). Robinson (1962), in the same vein, found that when university students are asked to list their problems, they mention difficulties with their studies more often than any other type of problem. His objective analysis of students' behavior showed that college students at all levels of ability lack effective study methods. Robinson also cited several studies which found that students in higher education are surprisingly inflexible in their method of reading different types of material with different directions and noted that a nationwide survey in the U.S. made by college* reading specialists showed that the majority of entering freshmen there need formal reading instruction. Robinson concluded that students do not learn study skills automatically; they need guidance and direction (16).

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* Used in the sense of the four year college in the United States; ie, university level work.

C. Gilbert Wrenn, author of the Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory, asserted that "the college or university should assume responsibility for giving the students skilled assistance in remedying their habits of work once they have discovered which habits are faulty." He firmly believed that "Almost any habit can be changed by persistent effort. For any habit that might tend toward low scholarship, there is an alternative habit that might help achieve higher scholarship. To possess a poor study habit is not nearly as unfortunate as to keep it."(19)

The authors are in general agreement that academic failure is the chief cause of involuntary dropout in higher education. The remedy for this growing problem is the implementation of academic skill programs which are designed to help students work to their full potential.

INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSORS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Following a survey of the literature, the researcher consulted with all five professors involved in teaching the basic course in Summer, 1979. Four of the five professors had had extensive experience teaching the Basic Course in the intensive format; the remaining professor had had considerable teaching experience in vocational education but no previous contact with the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time students. Interviews conducted in May, 1979, revealed the following skills identified by professors as those skills essential for successful completion of their module in the course as well as of the course in general:

- to read assigned textual materials with comprehension;
- to take meaningful notes from assigned textual materials;
- to take meaningful notes from class lectures;
- to follow directions for assignments;
- to write clear definitions;
- to build vocabulary in own trade and in vocational education;
- to outline textual materials;
- to complete problem-solving assignments;
- to write a book review;
- to compile a bibliography;
- to maintain standards for written work (write title page in correct format, etc.); and
- to answer objective tests successfully.

After contact with students in the course, one professor identified an additional skill, that of reading textual materials in order to participate in class discussion, as essential. As no papers of significant length were to be assigned in the course, writing skills were not given special attention at this time. Speaking skills were of most importance in the microteaching segment of the Methods of Teaching module and were handled by that professor within the context of the microteaching feedback.

FORMAT OF LANGUAGE/STUDY SKILL INSTRUCTION

Because the intensive format of the basic course placed demands on time and energy of students so as to prohibit them from obtaining additional instruction for improvement of

language/study skills and because language/study skills are best learned when applied to meaningful content and situations, the language/study skill identification and instruction was planned within the framework of the basic course. In considering possible formats for language/study skill instruction within the intensive programming of the Basic Integrated course, the following formats were considered by the principal researcher as being appropriate for such instruction and were therefore proposed to the staff involved in the teaching of the course:

- meeting students the 3rd or 4th day of the course for the full day;
- meeting students both the 3rd and 4th days, half days only;
- meeting 20 minutes each morning for the six week period, possibly with 20 minutes of home exercises 3 times per week; and
- meeting one hour per week in addition to any of the above plans.

In addition the principal researcher was to be available two afternoons per week for consultation by students (or by staff) to provide individual testing, remediation, and referral to other university services.

Discussions with involved staff produced no mutually agreeable timetable for language/study skill instruction. Although all staff felt the instruction desirable or essential, all were reluctant to relinquish class time when they had so much content to cover within the short time period. Finally, several consecutive sessions in the second week were scheduled, with remaining contact with students to be made through arrangements between individual professors and the researcher

or between students (individuals or group) and the researcher. Times for pretesting and posttesting were scheduled.

Appendix B lists for each of the ten scheduled sessions, the date, the length of the session, the topic, and the materials used. All materials may be obtained for review or use by contacting the researcher (currently available in English only).

Pretests were given in advance of the first session. Data from the pretests in addition to comments from an informal talk with students after several days in the course confirmed the professors' identification of certain reading skills as those most urgently needed. The first three sessions dealt with improving reading efficiency (speed and comprehension). Following those sessions, topics dealt with were at the request of individual professors (for example, session 4 on strategies for test review and session 9 on reading for participating in class discussion - see Appendix G) or students (session 6 on notetaking and sessions for assistance with specific assignments).

The researcher also provided suggestions and materials for professors dealing with specific language/study skills in their content areas. One professor, for example, used a lecture outline to assist students in meaningful listening and notetaking and to reinforce the use of an outline (see Appendix D). Another professor developed a sample title page for students' reference when he found students had little experience with this format (see Appendix E).

Additionally, students were encouraged to seek individual language/study skill counselling from the researcher during

breaks, lunch, or after class. Initially, a number of students took advantage of this service, but as they experienced increasing demands on their time as the course progressed, only two students used this service on any regular basis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

THE WRENN STUDY-HABITS INVENTORY

Academic achievement is affected by many factors, such as general scholastic aptitude, subject-matter background, motivation or drive, and study habits and attitudes. Because not only ability but also the way in which the ability is used is an important factor in scholastic achievement, it is often these habits of work that determine the effectiveness of the other factors in the study situation. The Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory was chosen as a pretest since it presents study skills, habits and attitudes often experienced by mature students in their initial experience with university life.

The Inventory is a weighted check list of specific study habits and attitudes which high scholarship and low scholarship groups of students possess in differing proportions. Such groups have been found to differ on these attitudes and habits even though they were matched on a number of other factors such as scores on intelligence test ability, sex, academic load, length of time in college, and patterns of subject matter taken. The check list of 28 study habits takes 20 minutes in or out of class for completion (see Appendix F).

The Inventory was designed to be administered to entering groups of students in order to determine the particular study weaknesses that are most evident for the group as a whole, so that class work or remedial assistance can be provided in the identified skills to the group as a whole or to individual students. As the usefulness of the Inventory lies in the

clinical significance of a given study habit for a given student, the use of total scores is likely to be of relatively small importance; however, if the total score is below a plus 15, the average total score for college freshmen, individual item scores should be examined with great care. A negative score means that more students of low scholarship than high scholarship checked the item. The score is especially significant if the answer was in Column 1 (Rarely or Never) or Column 3 (Often or Always). In addition, the size of the score is "somewhat" indicative of the importance of the habit. The habits which receive negative scores are the ones associated with the student's inability to achieve his best scholarship record.

Wrenn: Total Scores

One use of the Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory is to identify students whose total scores fall below a plus 15, the average total score for college freshmen on whom the Inventory was tested. Six of the eleven entering students scored below this cut-off mark, their scores ranging from +05 to -47 (see Figure 1). Of these six with scores less than plus 15, 4 of the five (1 was absent) had improved their scores while one score declined. It is interesting that this student's lower score (from -16 to -27) was not due to an increase in negative scores but to a decrease in the positive score; that is, the student did not rate his strengths as highly as when he entered the program whereas he evaluated his weaknesses similarly at the beginning and end of the program. This may

indicate an altered perception of his own ability as related to university demands.

Of the six students scoring below plus 15 on the pretest, one improved his score sufficiently to rise above the plus 15 criteria while other scores improved from 6 to 55 points. On the pretest the average score for the group was 23.8, not much above the minimal score recommended for beginning university work, confirming professors' past observations that students in this program often entered with minimal academic skills. The improvement of the mean score on the posttest, 38.3, may be attributed to the experience of university standards and with the program itself as well as to the study skills sessions.

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Total Scores

Student Identification	Pretest Positive Score	Pretest Negative Score	Pretest Total Score	Posttest Positive Score	Posttest Negative Score	Posttest Total Score
1 - 01	75	-76	-01*	-	-	-
1 - 02	106	-60	46	112	-40	72
1 - 03	122	-12	110	138	-14	124
1 - 04	70	-72	-02*	75	-62	13*
1 - 05	127	-20	107	127	-11	116
1 - 06	66	-61	05*	103	-42	61
1 - 07	37	-84	-47*	30	-71	-41*
1 - 08	61	-80	-19*	63	-73	-10*
1 - 09	70	-54	16	-	-	-
1 - 10	53	-69	-16*	39	-68	-29*
1 - 11	104	-41	63	-	-	-
Group Mean	81	-57	23.8	85.9	-48	38.3

* Scores below plus 15

Figure 1

Wrenn: Total Scores (Second Year Students)

The Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory administered to the students in the second year class for purposes of comparison of the two groups showed 8 of 17 students had scores below the plus 15 criterion (see Figure 2). This represents 47% of the class compared with 55% of the first year class who did not meet this criterion point. In addition, the second year students' group mean for the total score, 23.1, matched closely the 23.8 group mean for the entering students on the pretest. Even the total positive scores (79.2 - second year; 81 - first year) and total negative scores (-56.1 - second year; -57 - first year) showed that the two groups of students were extremely similar in study habits (refer to Figures 1 and 2).

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Total Scores†

Student Identification	Positive Score	Negative Score	Total Score
2 - 01	68	-82	-14*
2 - 02	49	-72	-23*
2 - 03	96	-42	54
2 - 04	112	-32	80
2 - 05	132	-18	114
2 - 06	88	-48	40
2 - 07	-	-	-
2 - 08	93	-45	48
2 - 09	39	-74	-35*
2 - 10	60	-73	-13*
2 - 11	91	-47	44
2 - 12	105	-33	72
2 - 13	71	-71	0*
2 - 14	54	-63	-09*
2 - 15	57	-61	-04*
2 - 16	80	-59	21
2 - 17	79	-63	16
2 - 18	72	-70	02*
Group Mean (N = 17)	79.2	-56.1	23.1

† Second year students

* Scores below plus 15

Figure 2

Wrenn: Negative Scores

The number of skills with negative scores and with significant* negative scores were tallied for each student (see Figure 3). Students with total scores less than a plus 15 were found to have from 1 to 8 skills with significant negative scores on the pretest. A marked decrease in the number of skills with significant negative scores occurred for all students except one student, for whom the number of skills remained the same. The group showed an overall decrease in number of skills with significant negative scores, with the pretest mean of 3.9 dropping to a posttest mean of 1.75, although the number of skills with negative scores (not significant) remained nearly the same.

---

* Significant negative scores are attributed to responses in Column 1 (Rarely or Never) or Column 3 (Often or Always) and are somewhat indicative of the importance of the habit.

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Negative Scores

	Pretest			Posttest		
Student Identification	Total Negative Score	Number of Skills with Negative Scores	Number of Skills with Significant Negative Scores	Total Negative Score	Number of Skills with Negative Scores	Number of Skills with Significant Negative Scores
1 - 01	-76	15	4	-	-	-
1 - 02	-60	10	4	-40	9	2
1 - 03	-12	5	1	-14	5	0
1 - 04	-72	14	4	-62	12	1
1 - 05	-20	4	1	-11	4	0
1 - 06	-61	11	1	-42	8	0
1 - 07	-84	14	8	-71	16	1
1 - 08	-80	15	6	-73	14	6
1 - 09	-54	10	6	-	-	-
1 - 10	-69	14	4	-68	15	4
1 - 11	-41	10	2	-	-	-
Group Mean	-57	11	3.9	-48	10	1.75

Figure 3

Wrenn: Negative Scores (Second Year Students)

The Inventory administered to second year students in the program for the purpose of comparison of the two groups showed the group mean for the number of skills with negative scores to be 11.7, as compared with the entering students' mean score of 11 on the pretest and 10 on the posttest (see Figures 3 and 4). The group mean score for second year students for the number of skills with significant negative scores was 3.7 as compared to the first year's students scores of 3.9 at the beginning and 1.75 at the end of the summer course.

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Negative Scores†

Student Identification	Number of Skills with Negative Scores	Number of Skills with Significant Negative Scores
2 - 01	15	4
2 - 02	15	3
2 - 03	9	2
2 - 04	7	5
2 - 05	5	1
2 - 06	11	5
2 - 07	-	-
2 - 08	11	4
2 - 09	14	9
2 - 10	10	4
2 - 11	11	1
2 - 12	6	1
2 - 13	14	5
2 - 14	13	3
2 - 15	13	2
2 - 16	12	4
2 - 17	13	3
2 - 18	14	6
Group Mean	11.7	3.7

† Second year students

Figure 4

Wrenn: Item Analysis

An item analysis identified those habits causing most difficulty for the class as a whole (see Figure 5). On the pretest more students (10 of 11) indicated Item 1 (not receiving sufficient understanding from a first reading of material) to be a cause of difficulty than any other single item. Other items identified most frequently by students were the following:

- identifying important points while reading (7 students),
- pronouncing words silently while reading (6),
- difficulty in concentrating while reading (8),
- day-dreaming while studying (7),
- taking time to get settled into studying (9),
- difficulty finishing work under pressure (8), and
- "blowing" exams (8).

On the posttest Item 1 (not receiving sufficient understanding from a first reading of material) and Item 9 (wasting time while waiting for "inspiration") were chosen most frequently by students (7 each). All items chosen frequently on the pretest were chosen by fewer students on the posttest.

Of items receiving significant negative scores on the pretest, Items 1 (not receiving sufficient understanding from a first reading of material), Item 4 (pronouncing words silently while reading) and Item 18 ("blowing" exams) were identified by 5, 6 and 5 students respectively. On the posttest no item received a significant negative score from more than two students. Eighteen of the 28 items did not receive significant negative scores from any student on the posttest compared with only 8 of 28 not receiving significant negative scores on the pretest.

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Item Analysis

Item	Pretest (N = 11)		Posttest (N = 8)	
	Number of Negative Scores	Number of Significant Negative Scores	Number of Negative Scores	Number of Significant Negative Scores
1	10	5	7	2
2	7	-	4	-
3	1	1	-	-
4	6	6	1	-
5	5	-	2	-
6	8	4	4	1
7	7	4	5	1
8	9	3	6	-
9	5	1	7	1
10	5	1	5	2
11	2	2	1	1
12	-	-	-	-
13	8	2	4	2
14	2	-	2	-
15	2	-	1	-
16	1	1	1	-
17	4	1	3	-
18	8	5	6	2
19	2	2	-	-
20	5	1	4	1
21	5	1	6	-
22	-	-	-	-
23	1	1	-	-
24	1	-	1	-
25	3	3	1	1
26	5	2	5	-
27	2	3	3	-
28	2	-	4	-

Figure 5

Wrenn: Item Analysis (Second Year Students)

The two items identified by most students (15 of 17) in the second year class were difficulties in finishing exams in the allotted time and in understanding points while reading. These items were not identified frequently by students in the first year class, possibly because of their lack of university experience at the time of the pretest. The four other items most often chosen by second year students were also identified by the entering class:

- day-dreaming when studying (13 students),
- taking time to get settled into studying (14),
- not receiving sufficient understanding from a first reading of material (11), and
- identifying important points while reading (11).

Items receiving significant negative scores by the most students were number 4, pronouncing words silently while reading (7 students), and number 20, difficulties in completing exams in the allotted time (6 students).

Only 8 of the 28 items did not receive significant negative scores from any students, corresponding exactly in number with the entering students' pretest (see Figure 6).

Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

Item Analysis†

Item	Number of Negative Scores	Number of Significant Negative Scores
1	11	2
2	11	-
3	4	4
4	7	7
5	7	-
6	8	1
7	13	1
8	14	2
9	9	2
10	7	1
11	1	1
12	5	5
13	7	3
14	7	-
15	4	-
16	2	-
17	3	-
18	9	2
19	3	3
20	15	6
21	15	5
22	4	4
23	3	3
24	6	-
25	4	4
26	6	-
27	6	4
28	6	3

(N = 17)

† Second year students

Figure 6

STUDENT SELF-RATING OF STUDY SKILLS

After completing the Wrenn Inventory, students were asked to rate their own study skills for nine items considered essential by the researcher for their success in their program. Figure 7 shows individual responses and the group mean for each item. The lowest mean scores (2.0 for item 1 and 1.5 for item 2) were not unexpected as nearly all students had little or no recent coursework in higher education and all but one student were in their first course at McGill. Items 3, 4 and 9 were rated slightly below average by the group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.8, 2.9, 2.8).

Mean scores for items 5, 6, 7 and 8 were just slightly above the average ability rating ($\bar{X}$ = 3.3, 3.2, 3.1, 3.1 respectively). It was somewhat unexpected that students with little or no recent formal schooling would evaluate their notetaking and writing skills so highly as these are often the skills with which the students experience the most difficulties. Also of note is that while no student rated himself 5 (Excellent Ability) or 1 (Poor Ability) on Item 8 (Studying), a full range of responses occurred on Item 9 (Taking Exams).

It should be noted that students were in the third day of class at the time this inventory was administered; therefore, they may not have had the experience ith which to evaluate accurately their skills. No posttest was administered for these skills.

Student Self-Rating of Study Skills

Item Analysis

Item	5	4	3	2	1	Group Mean
1. General library use	-	1	2	3	4	2
2. Faculty of Education library use	-	-	2	1	7	1.5
3. Improving reading speed	1	1	4	3	1	2.8
4. Improving reading comprehension	-	2	6	1	1	2.9
5. Notetaking from lectures	-	5	3	2	-	3.3
6. Notetaking from books	1	2	5	2	-	3.2
7. Writing papers	-	5	2	2	1	3.1
8. Studying	-	4	3	3	-	3.1
9. Taking exams	1	2	3	2	2	2.8

Code: 5 - Excellent Ability

3 - Average Ability

1 - Poor Ability

N = 10 (missing 1-07)

Figure 7

TIMED PRACTICE

As a part of the language/study skills instruction, students were given opportunity to practice reading for various goals. In helping the student to evaluate his reading rate and comprehension, timed practice in the form of timed readings and timed exercises were used. Four timed selections of neutral material 1000 and 1350 words in length were read, after which rates were recorded and comprehension tests were completed and recorded. Students then calculated their efficiency scores and set goals for the next timed practice. Practice of this sort is commonly used to increase students' rate and comprehension, but as insufficient time was available for the consistent practice needed for improvement, the practice was used primarily to assess students' reading abilities.

Timed exercises, consisting of 25 words in the left column to be identified in a line of 5 similar words in the right column, permitted students to evaluate speed of eye movements and ability to make fine distinctions quickly. Again, this sort of timed practice could be used for improving reading rate when time is available for consistent practice. For this study, scores on timed exercises are used as another measure of the students' reading abilities.

Timed Readings

Figure 8 shows the rate, comprenension and efficiency (Rate x Comprehension = Efficiency) scores for four timed readings administered over a four week period. While a general pattern of improvement can be seen for most students, no

generalization can be made on the basis of four exercises only. Students were encouraged to push reading speed (as most had become accustomed to reading at a leisurely pace, if at all, during their years away from formal schooling) while maintaining a comprehension level of 60% or above. Figure 8 shows the students' attempts to find the maximum rate at which they could maintain an adequate comprehension level. (Lower scores on Reading 4 may reflect the increased difficulty of the text.) Individual mean scores for the four timed readings show only 3 students reading at a rate above 200 words per minute (wpm), considered by most reading specialists to be well below a desirable reading speed for students entering university. When rate and efficiency are considered together in the efficiency score, only one student attained a score over 200, and that probably not representative of his average reading ability since his third reading rate seems inflated. With a mean score of 130 for the class, all students were evaluated as having need of instruction and practice on improving reading efficiency.

Composite Score Sheet for Timed Readings

(Rate - Comprehension - Efficiency)

	"Why You Do Not Read As Well As You Can" 1000 words	"Becoming A More Efficient Reader" 1000 words	"Communication and Propaganda" 1350 words	"Sherlock Holmes" 1350 words			
Student Identification	Timed Reading 1 R C E	Timed Reading 2 R C E	Timed Reading 3 R C E	Timed Reading 4 R C E	Individual Mean Scores R	C	E
1 - 01	154- 80-123	162- 80-130	ABSENT	ABSENT	158	80	127
1 - 02	215- 80-172	273- 70-191	540- 50-270	261- 70-183	311*	68	204
1 - 03	200- 85-170	222- 80-178	312- 90-201	182- 90-164	229	86	178
1 - 04	118- 70- 83	150- 80-120	193- 50- 96	160- 40- 64	155	60	91
1 - 05	215- 50-108	215- 70-171	253-100-253	186- 70-130	217	73	166
1 - 06	183- 50- 92	166- 70-116	169- 60-101	162- 70-113	170	63	106
1 - 07	ABSENT	181- 40- 73	180- 20- 36	153- 70-107	171	43	72
1 - 08	154- 40- 62	183- 70-128	231- 60-138	140- 60- 84	177	58	103
1 - 09	166- 60-124	183- 50- 92	208- 50-104	235- 80-188	198	60	127
1 - 10	183- 90-164	183- 60-109	208- 50-104	153- 70-107	182	68	121*
Group Mean Scores	176- 67-122	192- 67-131	255- 59-145	181- 69-127	197	66	130

† Scores have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

* Scores not representative of usual reading rate, comprehension or efficiency.

Figure 8

Timed Exercises

Timed exercises were administered to promote increased speed of eye movements and to encourage faster reading rates with less concern for comprehension as test questions were not administered. As was desired and expected, scores for reading rates, both individually and as a group, were somewhat higher than for the timed readings; however, a group mean score of only 200 for rate indicates the need for much practice of increased rate of reading (see figure 9).

Comprehension scores were much higher than on timed readings but this is to be attributed to the lower level of comprehension required; i.e., simply recognizing similar terms as compared to higher level comprehension questions on the timed readings.

Contact time with students was not sufficient to permit use of more timed exercises.

Composite Score Sheet for Timed Exercises

(N = 10)

Student Identification	25 words Timed Exercise 1-1 R C E	25 words Timed Exercise 1-3 R C E	Individual Mean Scores R	C	E
1 - 01	225- 96-216	ABSENT	225	96	216
1 - 02	225- 92-207	257- 96-247	241	94	227
1 - 03	225-100-225	257-100-257	241	100	241
1 - 04	200- 96-192	180-100-180	190	98	186
1 - 05	225- 96-216	257-100-257	241	98	237
1 - 06	164- 92-150	180-100-180	172	96	165
1 - 07	ABSENT	164-100-164	164	100	164
1 - 08	150- 96-144	164- 96-157	157	96	151
1 - 09	225-100-225	257-100-257	241	100	257
1 - 10	120- 88-105	129- 96-124	125	92	115
Group Mean Scores	195- 95-187	205- 99-203	200	97	196

† Scores have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Figure 9

WRITING SAMPLE

A writing sample for the sixteen (16) students in the second year class was analyzed at the request of their professor. A sample was not taken from first year students. Figure 10 shows an analysis of each student's sample in reference to predetermined criteria unknown to the students. The task given by the professor was not announced as being used for writing analysis; therefore, it would seem that the work is representative of the work usually done in class in a specified period of time by the students. Eight of the papers (50%) were found too brief for adequate analysis, this brevity affecting paragraph development, number of paragraphs and number of sentences per paragraph. Two papers were rated "Good" and three as "Probably OK". Areas where most students needed improvement were paragraph development (3 were "Good" to "OK" while 10 needed improvement) and sentence structure (2 were rated "Good", 5 "Need Help" while all were seen to be able to improve.) Areas of difficulty often identified in writing analyses, those of run-ons and/or fragments or of capitalization and/or punctuation errors were found on only four papers each. (One paper had 7 capitalization and/or punctuation errors.) Ten of the sixteen papers had spelling errors although the vocabulary was not of a highly technical nature.

The major recommendation was for instruction with emphasis on the development of the overall organization of the paper, with better paragraphing (that is, more paragraphs and longer paragraphs) as many papers consisted of only one or two paragraphs of two to three sentences each.

COURSE #436-268C

ANALYSIS OF WRITING SAMPLE

X - indicates problem area identified in this writing sample

Student Identification	General Comments and/or Major Problem(s)	Paragraph Development	No. of Paragraphs	No. of Sent. per Paragraph	Sentence Structure	No. of Run-ons, Fragments	No. of Cap./ Punct. Errors	No. of Sp. Errors	No. of Verb Problems
2-01	Sp., Cap., limited vocabulary	X	4	1-3		3	7	3	
2-02	Too brief, but may be capable		2	1-2				1	1
2-03	Good use of vocabulary, brief	good	3	2-3	good		1	2	
2-04	Good paper		4	1					
2-05	Weak, but probably OK		2	2-7		1	3	1	1
2-06	Too brief	?	2	3	X - very simple sent.				
2-07	Too brief	?	1	5			2	2	
2-08	Good vocabulary	OK	3	2	X - but some very good			1	
2-09	Understands*, few errors, sentences don't flow	X	4	1-2	X - very simple				
2-10	Too brief, paragraph development	X	3	1-3	X	1		1	

FIGURE 10

Student Identification	General Comments and/or Major Problems	Paragraph Development	No. of Paragraphs	No. of Sent. per paragraph	Sentence Structure	No. of Run-ons, Fragments	No. of Cap./ Punct. Errors	No. of Sp. Errors	No. of Verb Problems
2-11	Too brief, paragraph development	X	2	2					
2-12	Understands*, probably OK	X	4	1-3					
2-13	Too brief	X	2	2	X			2	
2-14	Too brief	X	4	1-2				2	
2-15	Too brief	X	3	2		2		2	
2-16	Understands*, probably OK	OK	4	2-3	good				
TOTAL = 16		3 - OK/good 10 could use help	Range = 1-4	Range = 1-7 Most 2-3	2 - good 5 - need help all could profit from help	4 papers	4 papers	10 papers	2 papers

* Paper shows students understand the library/research process.

Donna Logsdon Cook
August 1979

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this study, the following recommendations were made for improved language/study skill preparation of students in the B.Ed. (Vocational) Part-Time Program:

- A policy should be developed among professors in this program regarding language competencies to be expected in their course assignments throughout the entire program;
- A language/study skills self-assessment should be completed by the student at the time of his interview or immediately after acceptance into the program (an alternative being an administered "test");
- Skills materials should be developed for use by the student individually at home and/or in conjunction with several teacher-led class sessions for the practice of study skills (these to be completed before initial classes and for no credit, possibly in six 2 hour evening sessions the three weeks prior to summer school; sessions waived when seen as unnecessary by academic advisor);
- A plan should be developed for referring students with specific teacher- or student-identified deficiencies to appropriate remediation resources at the earliest possible time;
- Students should tour the Education Library and the Undergraduate Library prior to/early in the initial phase of their program;
- Every attempt should be made to encourage integration of language/study skills with vocational course content and classroom practice so that both students in the program and their students as well may see the value of improved language/study skills;
- Students could attend academic skill development workshops designed for mature students offered in the Fall at McGill by Student Services; and
- Professors should check readability level of textual materials, keeping in mind that students' reading rate and comprehension will generally decrease as the readability level increases.

For follow-up to the initial summer skills session the following recommendations were made:

- One of the half-day Fall seminars should be given to instruction in library skills and another to techniques for writing a term paper; and
- Short skills sessions (half-hour in length) could be given as part of each seminar session for both terms in the second phase of the program.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Timetable for Basic Integrated Course.

B. Language/Study Skill Sessions.

C. Sample Reading Assignment.

D. Lecture Outline

E. Sample Title Page

F. Wrenn Study - Habits Inventory.

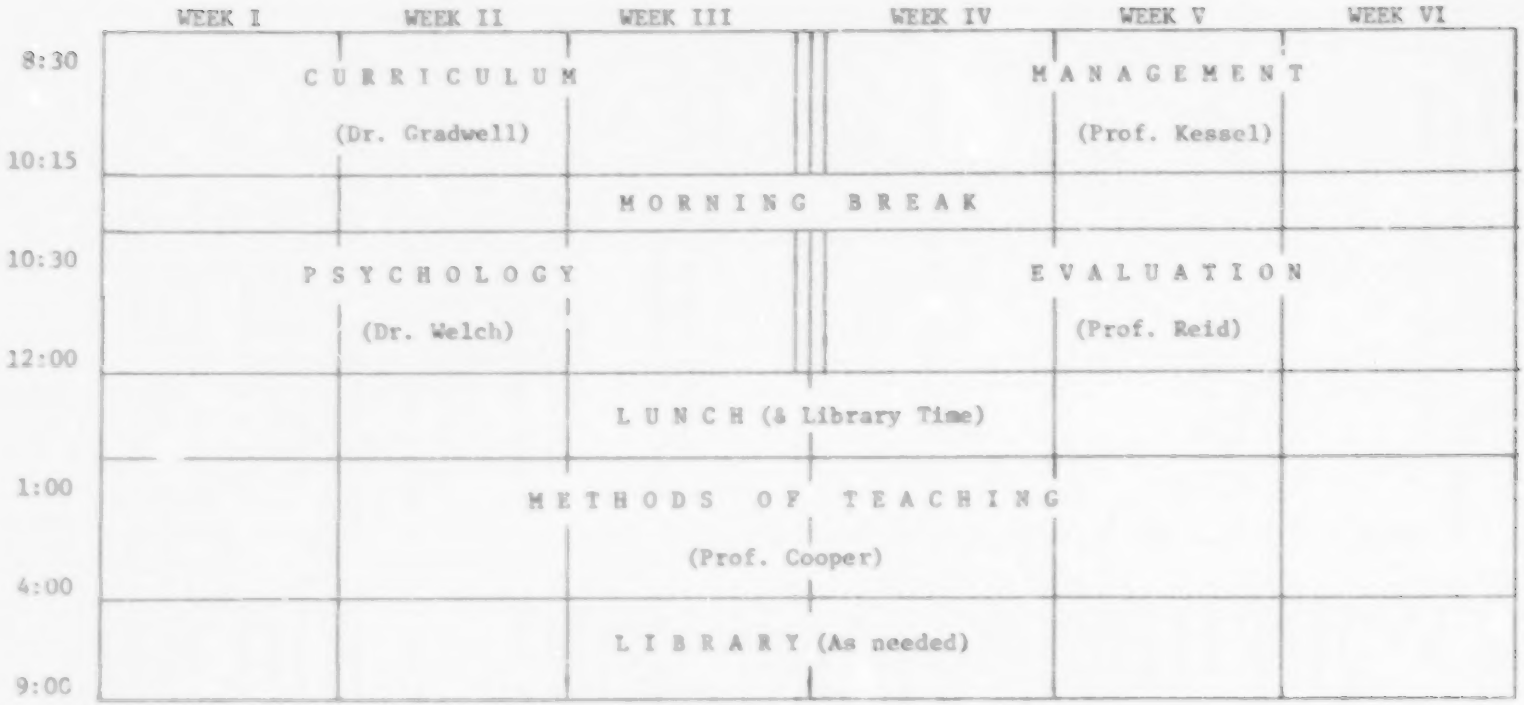
APPENDIX A

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

McGill University

Summer 1979

TIMETABLE FOR THE BASIC INTEGRATED COURSE, 436-266C



NOTE: Curriculum & Psychology are given the 1st three weeks.
Management & Evaluation are given the 2nd three weeks.
Methods of Teaching is given the entire six weeks.

APPENDIX B

LANGUAGE/STUDY SKILL SESSIONS

SESSION	DATE	LENGTH OF SESSION	TOPIC	MATERIALS USED
1	July 9	1½ hours	Reading Efficiency	- Timed Reading: "Why You Do Not Read As Well As You Can" - Individual Reading Record - Reading Rate Tables - "What Is Reading Efficiency?"
2	July 10	1½ hours	Reading Efficiency	- Timed Exercise I-1 (words) - Phrase Reading - skimming - Timed Reading: "Becoming a More Efficient Reader" - "How Do We Understand More of What We Read?" - Kinds of Reading
3	July 11	1½ hours	Reading Efficiency	- Timed Exercise I-3 (words) - "A Note on Skimming" - Timed Reading: "Communication and Propaganda" - "Alarm Clock Reading" - Application of Increased Rate - Nonfiction
4	July 12	½ hour	Test Review Strategies Reading Test Questions	- Text: Psychology and Instruction (Lahey and Johnson) - Vocabulary list from above text
5	July 13	45 min.	Group Conference Session	Students' Coursework
6	July 17	1 hour	Notetaking from Lectures	"5 R's of Notetaking"
7	July 19	1 hour	*Group Conference Session	Students' Coursework
8	July 30	1½ hours	*Group Conference Session	Students' Coursework
9	July 31	1½ hours	Reading for Retention Reading for Class Discussion	- Teacher Liability (handout - see appendix C) - Reading for Retention: How to Produce an Idea - How to Concentrate
10	Aug. 6	½ hour	Post tests	- Timed Reading: "Sherlock Holmes" - Wrenn Study-habits Inventory

* Topic originally planned not given due to student conflicts; therefore, an open conference session was held for interested available students.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE READING ASSIGNMENT

TEACHERS LIABILITY

Websters' dictionary defines environment as: surroundings, especially the conditions and influences under which one lives. It has been said that adaptation to environment is the condition of survival. Custom was the method by which man adapted himself to the environment, and the law became a method of coercion.[1] Today's environment is changing so rapidly that custom must be put aside as school cannot teach "custom". This fact may be causing some of our problems with the youth of our era.

As a teacher one should be aware of one's responsibility to a student or student body. Creative teaching involves adaptation to an educational system which has not been without error. This margin of error plays an important role in the development of a stable and viable system of learning for the youth of today and tomorrow. The growing field of vocational education takes a positive place in the preparation of our youth for tomorrow. In trying to broaden the horizons of his charges, the creative teacher may fear his liability should anything go wrong. The purpose of this paper is to give the teacher information concerning his liability and to eliminate some of his fears.

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1. P.G. Osborn, A Concise Law Dictionary 5th edition, Toronto, Ontario: The Carswell Company Ltd., 1961.

QUEBEC LAW

A teacher needs to know the policies and understand the practices that will help him to cope with his professional, legal and moral responsibilities in respect to teacher liability.

In Canada, Quebec, excepted, common law applies. In instances where a matter is under Federal jurisdiction, common law will apply in Quebec. Common law is Old English law, based on precedent or judgments from previous similar cases.

Quebec is governed by a Civil Code based on the Old French Law or Napoleonic Code.

Basically, under common law the accused is innocent until proven guilty, whereas under the Quebec Civil Code the accused is considered guilty until proven innocent. In Quebec, therefore, the accused bears the burden and cost of proving his innocence.

You may then ask: "What is liability and how vulnerable am I as a teacher?" One who commits a wrong, or breaks a contract or trust, is liable, or responsible for it. A wrongful act other than a crime or breach of contract is called a "tort". There exists a common law rule of torts in which provisions are made for bringing civil action for negligence. In such an instance the court must determine the existence of negligence and when sufficient proof is presented damages are assessed against the negligent party for injury caused.

When a case of "tort" liability is presented in court, the following questions must be answered:

1) Did the defendant act negligently or carelessly?

2) Did the defendant act prudently and reasonably and do everything humanly possible to avoid the "tort"?

Although we hear most frequently of "teachers liability" in connection with industrial education and the occurrence of shop accidents, it still is the concern of all teachers. A collection of the laws that apply to teacher liability in Quebec is attached to this paper, along with a glossary of the less common legal terms used.

The laws referred to are found in the Compilations of Statutes on Education Regulations of the Minister of Education Decreed Collective Agreement, and the Civil Code of the Province of Quebec.

Articles No. 245, 1053 and 1054 refer to parental authority and the role of a teacher who takes the position of a judicious parent. These articles refer to "damages" in that every person capable of judging right from wrong is liable for the damage caused to another by his fault; and they refer to vicarious responsibility meaning that not only is one liable for ones own fault, but also for the fault of those under ones supervision. This applies when the person subject to liability

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G. Harold Silvius, Estelle H. Curry, Teaching Successfully in Industrial education (Second edition: Bloomington Ill: McKnight & McKnight Publishing Co. 1957.)

fails to establish that the act causing the damage could not possibly have been prevented. The words "fails to establish" related to the fact that in Quebec the burden of proof lies on the accused, darkens the picture somewhat. However, the picture becomes brighter in reference to the Decreed Collective Agreement, section 5-12.01, in which the liability is placed on the school board, with the exception of serious fault or gross negligence.

Now we ask: "How does a teacher protect himself against these latter two charges?" To determine this we can consider some cases which have been presented previously before the courts of law.

Examples of Court Cases Concerning Teacher Liability

Denis J. Kigin in School Shop, April 1972 states that negligence charges stemming from a lack of supervision and inadequate instruction constitute the majority of tort cases brought against teachers. After citing examples of three shop accidents his conclustion is that the issue which decides a teachers responsibility boils down to the STANDARD OF CARE given to pupils by teachers surpervising and guiding them. The prime criteria in establishing negligence seems to be the ability to foresee a problem and proximate (injury producing) cause.

In one case a student sustained eye injury from a pencil which was thrown while the teacher was out of the classroom. The case was judged in favour of the teacher, however, dissenters stated "Children have a known proclivity to act impulsively without thought of the possibilities of danger. It is precisely this lack of mature judgment which makes supervision so vital.

In another case a girl was injured while playing line soccer. This case is cited by Patrick Bird in "Jopher", January 1970. The teacher was found liable for improper instruction as follows:

1. Improper instruction in ball handling
2. Not anticipating possible injury
3. Because the game was not in the syllabus for female students

Three common legal defences in cases of tort liability are

1. Act of God: The circumstances surrounding the injury were beyond the control of the school district.
2. Assumption of risk: Participation by a student in an activity under proper supervision and guidance resulting in an injury which would generally not lead to court action.
3. Contributory negligence: The act or failure to act, by the student as a direct or indirect cause of injury.

These have been examples of liability in regard to physical school activities. We will now consider a few other areas of teacher liability. A case where monetary damages were awarded to the student due to disclosure of confidential information about a student by a school official is stated in Vol. 89 1972 of Nations schools. The education digest of 1972 contains an article by Fredrick Oelrich titled "Must Counselors Tell All". If a counselor makes information of a defamatory nature available he is subject to the laws of libel and slander. In our own educational system as recently as a year ago there has been controversy concerning the confidentiality of a student's personal record.

"Can professional teachers be sued for malpractice?" This was a question asked by Richard K. Sparks and Hermine Strauss in the American School Journal of December 1972. Their opinion is that cases where emotional damage is involved are going to become more frequent in the future. Professionals, such as doctors, have associations and have set up measurable standards for their own protection and that of the individual. Should not teachers be deemed professionals and be permitted the rights to set up a standard of skill, knowledge and ability, established by a majority of competent individuals in the same field?

Granted this may result in malpractice suits, however, our children would then have the right to a level of competence comparable to that which the general public expects of its professionals? Teachers would then also be made accountable!

The U.S. Bill of Rights was amended in 1967 to include minors. This eliminated the role of judicious parent for the teacher and resulted in an escalated number of liability cases in the U.S. In Quebec teachers are still protected under the Civil Code as judicious parents, however one cannot control the opinion of a judge as to what constitutes a judicious parent. One judge could believe that judicious parents should employ negative reinforcement and disciplinary action be taken by means of corporal punishment, whereas the other may expect the parent to follow the advice of Dr. Spock and the permissive society. Which would you then employ? Where is the standard upon which you could depend to base a decision? Personal opinion cannot become basis for decision in a court of law! Laws, standards and systems cannot be changed overnight and as we await these changes, however slowly they may come about, there are certain precautions we can take to protect ourselves against a liability suit.

HOW CAN A TEACHER BEST PROTECT HIMSELF AGAINST A LIABILITY SUIT?

Some suggestions by various authorities are as follows:

1) Stay in the classroom. Be present during the entire class period.

2) Instigate a comprehensive and workable safety program.

3) Develop written accident prevention and safety policies.

4) Have set procedures in case of an emergency.

How Can a Teacher Best Protect Himself Against a Liability Suit? (cont'd)

5) Correct all known hazards and defective conditions.

6) Equip and maintain all machines with awards that meet or exceed industrial standards.

7) Insist on proper eye and face protection.

8) Report all accidents, no matter how minor, immediately.

9) Secure parents' signed permission for use of machines, tools, etc. and for when out of school visits that are part of the course of instruction are being made.

10) Maintain control of your students at all times.

Never take the "it will never happen to me" attitude. Make sure that you are covered by sufficient liability insurance. This can be obtained through personal insurance, through a professional association or school board.

The teacher's role today is to help the student adapt to the rate of an ever-changing environment. He can no longer teach "custom". These changes are not always familiar, neither to the student nor the teacher, but the teacher bears the burden and must protect himself from these hazards.

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APPENDIX D

LECTURE OUTLINE

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD EVALUATION

A. Validity

1. It measures what it says it measures.
   eg.

2. It tests the objectives - items are relevant.

B. Reliability

1. Results are consistent

   a.
   b.
   c.

C. Objectivity

1. There is agreement on "right" answers.

2. Results are not affected by:

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

3. There are no errors in marking.

D. Balance

1.

2.

E. Fairness

1. No trick items.

2. Check reading level and other preskills.

3.

F. Practical

1. Fits time available to:

   a. construct
   b. administer
   c. score

2. Not too expensive.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

THE GOOSE BAY CATERING EQUIPMENT COMPANY

A Technical Report

Presented To

Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Supérieur

Service du Perfectionnement

and

McGill University - Faculty of Education

Vocation Education Division

September 20, 1978

In Partial Fulfillment of

Course 436-387L

Submitted by

Jean X. Perience

APPENDIX F
Wrenn Study-Habits Inventory

	Rarely or Never	Sometimes	Often or Always	Score
A. *Reading and Note-taking Techniques*				
1. I have to re-read material several times—the words don't have much meaning the first time I go over them				
2. I have trouble picking out the important points in material read or studied; tend to take down material which turns out to be unimportant				
3. I go back and recite to myself the material studied—rechecking any points I find doubtful				
4. I pronounce the words to myself as I read				
5. I miss important points in the lecture while copying down notes on something which has gone before				
B. *Habits of Concentration*				
6. I find it hard to keep my mind on what I am studying—don't know what I have been reading about when I get through				
7. I have a tendency to "day-dream" when trying to study				
8. It takes me some time to get settled and "warmed up" to the task of study				
9. I have to wait for "the mood to strike me," for "an inspiration" before starting a task; I am likely to waste time				
C. *Distribution of Time and Social Relationships in Study*				
10. My study periods are often too short for me to get "warmed up" and concentrated				
11. My time is unwisely distributed; I spend too much time on some things and not enough on others				
12. My periods of study are interrupted by outside interference such as telephone calls, visitors, and distracting noises				
13. I find it hard to force myself to finish work by a certain time, under pressure; work is unfinished, inferior, or not in on time				
14. I study with others rather than by myself				

	Rarely or Never	Sometimes	Often or Always	Score
15. My enjoyment of loafing, "bull-sessions," or "chewing the fat," interferes with my study				
16. I spend too much time reading fiction, going to shows, etc., for the good of my school work				
17. Too much social life interferes with my school success—dances, dates, and trips				
D. *General Habits and Attitudes of Work*				
18. I get "fussed" and nervous on exams—blow up and can't do myself justice or tell what I know				
19. I plan out in my mind the answer to a subjective or essay-type examination question before starting to write the answer				
20. I finish my examination papers and turn them in before time is called on the examination				
21. I try to get each point as I go over it, rather than to go on at the time and then go back later to clear up doubtful points				
22. I try to carry over and relate material learned in one course to that learned in others				
23. I try to summarize, classify, and systematize the facts learned, associating them with previously learned material and facts				
24. I am conscious that I have been out of school too long, or took basic subjects too long ago				
25. I try to do some "over-learning," working beyond the point of immediate memory or recall				
26. I find myself too tired, sleepy, and listless to study efficiently				
27. I have to study where I can smoke—must "go out and have a smoke" when working at the library, etc.				
28. Dislike of certain courses and professors interferes with my school success				

FIN